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RHAYADER
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL



Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer
of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1964

RECEIVED

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MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

YEAR 1964

Chairman: Alderman E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman: R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

Councillors:

Abbeycwmhir: F. P. Hamer, A. R. Lewis

Cefnlllys Rural: J. T. L. Price

Llanbadarn Fawr: I. J. Lewis, R. T. Knill, C.C.

Llanfihangel Helygen: J. D. A. Thompson

Llansantffraid Cwmdenddwyr: Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.,

V. Lewis, W. Scott, J.P., J. D. Williams

Llanyre: S. E. Lloyd, W. A. Probert

Nantmel: R. E. P. Jones, A. E. Oakley, I. Thomas

Rhayader: R. P. L. Hughes, C.C., G. D. Morgan, C.C.

St. Harmon: D. H. Bound, Ald. E. T. K. Morgan, J.P.

Committees:

Public Health and Housing: All members of the Council
Chairman: G. D. Morgan, C.C. Vice-Chairman: V. Lewis

Finance and Rating: All members of the Council
Chairman: Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.
Vice-Chairman: J. T. L. Price

Medical Officer of Health:

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.
(Medical Practitioner and Part-time M.O.H.)
Telephone: Rhayader 31

Public Health Inspector:

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
(Certs. S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Foods of R.S.H.)

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Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader. Telephone: Rhayader 9

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER.

25th August, 1965

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for the year 1964.

The health of the community remained satisfactory throughout the year with the incidence of infectious diseases generally low. There was an epidemic of measles affecting, for the most part, the younger children of the town in the summer months. There were some chest complications among their number but the illness was not unusually serious.

A great deal of progress relating to the council house programme was seen during the year.

The small estates at Crossgates and Pantydwr were completed. progress was made on the plans for a group of houses at Llanyre and the new estate in Rhayader was started. This estate, in addition to the proposed thirty-five houses, includes twelve group bungalows for the elderly adjacent to a new building providing part III accommodation for the older. The joint initiative here of the District Council and the County Council will enable those resident in the group bungalows to enjoy some of the amenities of the old people's residence. This will include the availability of the alarm system, should help be required in an emergency. This ability to enjoy independence and yet be able to summon help if needed, should be of great value.

The new water schemes for Rhayader and Pantydwr were farther advanced and completion is expected in 1965.

The Council revised its earlier decision to implement fluoridation of the Rhayader water supply because of doubts over its legality. The design of the new water treatment plant at Conyn has allowed for its inclusion at a future date. The fluoride content of the local services varies from 0.036 to 0.054 parts per million. The water which we take from the Birmingham aqueduct supply has had its fluoride content adjusted to one part per million.

The ambulance services in the district continue as they have done in recent years. The Welsh Ambulance Committee terminated its agency for the County Council. Members of the Rhayader Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade still provide the services, but at the direct request of the County Public Health Authority. That they perform this voluntary duty with consistent efficiency and often at a considerable personal inconvenience, is worthy of comment and gratitude.

A great deal of national attention was paid to the depopulation of Mid-Wales during the year. It is a pleasure to record that figures of the Rural District for 1964 show a slight increase over 1963. The presence in the town of the new factories obviously have contributed towards this stabilisation. The arrival of light industry cannot by itself solve the problem of the drift away of the young, as it will continue unless some of the social amenities and greater choice of jobs which exist in the large towns can be offered within easy range locally.

I wish to thank you and all members of the Council Staff for help given to me throughout the year.

Great credit is due to the Surveyor for his attention to, and improvement of, the water supplies, and I am specially grateful to the Public Health Inspector for his service to Council and Community and for his preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES.

GENERAL STATISTICS

	1963	1964
Area of District	91,240 acres	
Estimated Population	4,040	4,110
Number of Inhabited Houses:		
In Parishes		
Abbeycwmhir ..	71	69
Cefnlllys Rural	26	23
Llanbadarn Fawr	151	162
Llanfihangel Helygen	14	15
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr	157	156
Llanyre (Rural Ward)	80	78
Llanyre (Village Ward)	129	134
Nantmel	201	199
Rhayader ..	342	344
St. Harmon	135	142
	1,306	1,322

Total includes five residential caravans

Rateable Value ..	£169,620
Product of a Penny Rate ..	£685

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Rhayader's density of population is extremely low, being one person per 21 acres. There is a tendency today for the population to begin to group even closer and there is a general trend from the outside villages into the slightly larger villages. At one time this was reflected in the wastage of the remoter uneconomical cottages but today the uncrowded conditions are attracting more and more people from the towns, and there is a desire to purchase these houses for reconditioning for weekend use. In many cases this is with a view to future retirement.

This desire to escape from the towns is perhaps helped by the particularly clean atmosphere in this area where there are no factories to pollute the air and where the accumulation of smoke from houses must be less because of the smaller conurbations.

One natural condition which is extremely fortunate is that Rhayader lies within the rain shadow area of the high range of mountains to the west. The result of this is that the warm saturated winds, blowing in over the sea, are forced to rise in these mountains and lose their moisture. As Rhayader is in the shadow area, it means that the rainfall is lighter than it could be and this is exemplified by the fact that gauges in the hills within a few miles to

the west show almost double the amount of rainfall than those in the town. The figures for rainfall are as below. These are obviously at a disadvantage compared with those in Kew. This is only to be expected at this altitude, and this far west, but on the credit side we have the purer atmosphere.

		Kew 1964	Rhayader 1964
January	....	0.53 ins.	6.96 ins.
February	...	0.70 "	4.57 "
March	..	3.27 "	5.85 "
April		3.18 "	3.66 "
May	....	1.67 "	3.65 "
June	...	3.89 "	3.50 "
July	....	1.95 "	1.09 "
August	....	1.92 "	3.26 "
September	..	0.41 "	3.15 "
October	..	1.21 "	2.29 "
November		1.34 "	8.21 "
December	..	1.34 "	2.43 "
		<hr/> 21.41 ins. <hr/>	<hr/> 48.62 ins. <hr/>

Rainfall in 1964 expressed as a percentage of the long average,
i.e. 1964-1951 99.7%

Whilst there is a large discrepancy between the rainfall at Kew and at Rhayader, the National average is generally taken at 30 inches.

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by a part time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and Water Engineer and a Public Health Inspector. A Rodent Operative is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of water are undertaken by the Public Health Service, Shrewsbury, and chemical analyses by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader and Newbridge-on-Wy.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llaridloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council. At present there are four nurses resident in the district, the rest of the area is covered from outside. The service has been augmented by the appointment of a Health Visitor who specialises in the welfare of the old and young.

Ambulance Services are provided by the Local St. John's Voluntary Service. This arrangement works well and avoids the inevitable delays which would arise from a central service in such a sparsely populated area where distance and lack of local knowledge might prove to be insuperable obstacles.

1964 saw the inauguration of a Meals on Wheels Service for old people and it is to be hoped that this service will be permitted to continue.

VITAL STATISTICS

The object of giving Vital Statistics in a report of this kind is that they can be compared with the figures for other comparable areas and for the country as a whole. The study of these figures can give interesting readings to statisticians and can often lead to detection of some weakness in either social conditions or in public health.

Unfortunately when these figures are extremely low, as they must be in a low populated area, they have to be read carefully since in some cases an increase of one can mean a rate goes up by 50 per cent. This is patently absurd but by studying the figures for a number of years then a truer picture can be formed.

Live Births		1963	1964
Male—legitimate	... ..	28	31
—illegitimate	... ..	—	2
	Total	28	33
Female—legitimate		35	33
—illegitimate	.... ..	—	1
	Total	35	34
	Totals	63	67
Rate per 1,000 Population (corrected)		18.09	18.91
Rate for England and Wales (approx.)		18.1	
Illegitimate Live Births			
Per cent of total live births	..	Nil	4.5%
Still Births			
Male—legitimate		1	Nil
—illegitimate	..	Nil	Nil

Female—legitimate	Nil	Nil
—illegitimate	Nil	Nil
Total	1	Nil
Rate per 1,000 live and still births	15.6	Nil
Rate for England and Wales	17.3	

This figure of course exemplifies the absurdity of statistics when small numbers are concerned and it is therefore necessary to take totals for the past sixteen years to get any sort of picture at all. These are as follows:

	<i>Still Births</i>	<i>Total (Still and Live)</i>	<i>Rate per 1,000</i>
1964	Nil	67	18.91
1959–1963	12	327	36.7
1954–1958	6	314	19.13
1949–1953	12	316	37.9
1949–64	30	1,024	29.3

When compared with the rate for England and Wales of about 17.3 it can be seen that there is no doubt that the number of still births in this area is still higher than the national average.

Total Live and Still Births

	<i>Still</i>	<i>Live</i>	<i>Total</i>
Males—legitimate	Nil	31	31
—illegitimate	Nil	2	2
Females—legitimate	Nil	33	33
—illegitimate	Nil	1	1
Totals	Nil	67	67

Infant Deaths

	<i>Under: one year</i>	<i>4 weeks</i>	<i>1 week</i>
Males—legitimate	Nil	Nil	Nil
—illegitimate	1	1	1
Females—legitimate	Nil	Nil	Nil
—illegitimate	Nil	Nil	Nil
Totals	1	1	1

Infant Mortality Rates

Total Infant deaths per 1,000 live births	14.9
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,000 legitimate births	—
Illegitimate infant deaths per 1,000 illegitimate births	14.9

Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births	14.9
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Early Neo Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under one week per 1,000 live births	14.9
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

Still Births and deaths under one week combined per 1,000 live and still births	14.9
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Maternal Mortality

Nil

Births and Deaths compared

				<i>Rate per 1,000 Population (Corrected)</i>	<i>Rate for England and Wales</i>
				<i>Births</i>	
1964 . . . . .	...	...	67	18.91	18.2
Average over previous ten years	—			19.37	16.56
				<i>Rate per 1,000 Population (Corrected)</i>	<i>Rate for England and Wales</i>
				<i>Deaths</i>	
1964 . . . . .	...	...	50	11.44	12.2
Average over previous ten years	—			12.1	11.7

If it were necessary to prove that there was drift away population, the following figures would prove the point. In the past sixteen years the natural increase, that is the excess births over deaths, is 110, but in the same time the population has fallen by 588, a total decrease of 698 to the present figure of 4,110. It should perhaps be noted at this point that the population figures for 1964 do show an increase of 70 over those figures for 1963.

For many years past now the hope has been expressed that the population would stabilise itself. In the immediate past there has been some development in the way of industries in the town. It seems perhaps that this infusion of small new industries into the district is having the desired effect and it is to be hoped that this trend will continue.

Causes of Death

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Malignant neoplasin—stomach	1	1
Malignant neoplasm—lung bronchus	1	Nil

Malignant neoplasm—uterus	—	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	3	4
Vascular lesions of nervous system	2	8
Coronary disease, angina	8	2
Hypertension with heart disease	1	Nil
Other heart disease	1	3
Other circulatory disease	1	1
Bronchitis	1	1
Other diseases of respiratory system	1	Nil
Nephritis and nephrosis	1	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases	3	Nil
Motor vehicle accidents	2	Nil
All other accidents	2	Nil
Suicide	1	Nil
Total deaths all causes	29	21

This year there is another death from lung cancer and it is to be noted that this is again male. In fact of 361 deaths in the past seven years there has been a total of 8 from lung cancer, 2 of which were female and 6 male. These are odds of 3 to 1 in favour of the males getting lung cancer and seems to bear out all evidence that heavier smoking does lead to this complaint. It seems that the female sex have still some leeway to make up in order to gain equality with males in this respect. Lectures are still given to schoolchildren upon the effects of smoking but there seems to be an unequal struggle compared with the flood of advertising put out through the other commercial media.

Deaths in Age Groups

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Under four weeks	1	Nil
Fifteen years plus	1	Nil
Twenty-five years plus	2	Nil
Thirty-five years plus	Nil	1
Forty-five years plus	1	1
Fifty-five years plus	5	5
Sixty-five years plus	11	5
Seventy-five years plus	8	9

Infectious Diseases

There were no epidemics of infectious diseases during the year, and notifications were as follows:

Pneumonia	1
Whooping Cough	1
Measles	96

Tuberculosis

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Number of cases notified (non-pulmonary)	Nil	1
Number of cases on register:		
Pulmonary	4	3
Non-pulmonary	4	4

National Assistance Act, 1948 — Section 46

This Section of the Act gives power to remove persons who are in need of care and attention to institutions.

No action was necessary during the year.

Common Lodging Houses

The circular from the Welsh Board of Health asks for particulars of common lodging houses in the district. In a rural area such as this there are none.

Housing

A review of the housing position at the turn of the year holds out great promise of the year to come. It seems that there is every reason to hope that there will be a large number of houses available in Rhayader and Llanyre with some more at Crossgates, perhaps before the turn of the year. Greater progress has been made in the outlying districts in the past than in Rhayader itself, but the Dark Lane housing scheme should put an end to this and effectively clear up all Category V properties in Rhayader.

In such a close knit rural community as this there is obviously a reluctance to proceed by way of Statutory Notices thus progress is sometimes slow due to the personal approach which has to be made in all these slum clearance problems, however, the example of slum clearance over the past few years does seem to have conditioned the majority of house owners to the fact that their property has only a limited life and it is marked that in the past year an approach has been made by an owner to the Public Health Department asking for advice as to the possible future life of his house. He himself thought that this was extremely limited and wanted to know how best to rehouse his tenant. This is in marked contrast to ten years ago when all progress on housing was strongly resisted.

Last year's report contained a key for an extension for the Standard Grant scheme in rural areas because of higher costs involved. It is gratifying to note that the new Standard Grant scheme does include extra for septic tank, etc.

There does seem to be much greater interest in Standard Grants and Improvement Grants in general than there was a few years ago

in spite of rising building costs. No doubt some of this interest has been awakened by the constant inspections made and the rural housing surveys, etc., and it is gratifying when approaching an owner as to defects in housing to be able to hold up the inducement of a Grant towards the cost of work.

Much interest is shown in the remoter cottages by people from the Midlands, etc., for use as holiday cottages. Some of these are making applications for Improvement Grants and this is causing some concern to the Council. A ruling has been made that Discretionary Grants shall not be given for holiday accommodation but concern is still felt that the payment of Standard Grants is obligatory.

The records kept on the rural housing survey are being continually revised as this position is obviously in a state of flux, the present position is as follows:

Parish	Grades					Total	Occu- pied
	1	2	3	4	5		
Abbeycwmhir	24	2	24	19	2	71	69
Cefnlllys Rural	9	—	6	8	3	26	23
Llanbadarn Fawr	79	3	44	26	11	163	162
Llanfinagel Helygen	3	—	8	4	—	15	15
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr	102	1	35	27	3	168	156
Llanyre	96	8	71	40	—	215	212
Nantmel	64	5	81	47	8	205	199
Rhayader	225	5	68	26	25	349	344
St. Harmon	42	3	60	35	4	144	142
Totals and Percentages							
1959	499	32	451	256	137	1,375	—
	36%	2%	33%	19%	10%		
1964	644	27	397	232	56	1,356	1,322
	47%	2%	29%	17%	4%		

It will be seen from this that the number of Grade 1 Houses has increased by 144 in five years or expressed in percentages from 36% to 47%.

As there is only a very small amount of private building going on the difference in the number of Grade 1 houses is almost certainly due to improvements with Grant aids. The number of houses now with bathrooms is approaching 50% and it is hoped that this trend will continue. There is obviously still a great deal to be done. Nantmel still remains the Parish which is perhaps the most backward in houses with full amenities. How far this is due to the scattered nature of the Parish is not known but it is true that Nantmel perhaps has the fewest services of the other Parishes.

The difference of work on housing Act purposes has become most marked. There are now fewer complaints about housing defects. The biggest part of Public Health work in connection with

houses now seems to be the urging of improvements with Grant purposes. In such a rural area this often involves a great deal of work on the best way of carrying out these improvements. This may be rather time consuming but it is felt that in the long run this must win dividends in houses which perhaps would not otherwise be improved. In this connection too pride can be made to play its part and a few well chosen hints about improvements of such and such a farm can often work wonders.

Sewerage

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Column</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Abbeycwmhir	—	24	47	71	
Cefnlllys Rural	—	9	17	26	
Llanbadarnfawr		72	40	51	163	
Llanfihangel Helygen	—	3	12	15	—
Llansantffraid Cwmdeuddwr	74	39	55	168	—
Llanyre	124	38	53	215	24 plus 14 new
Nantmel	5	72	128	205	—
Rhayader	341	3	5	349	3 plus 48 new
St. Harmon	8	37	99	144	—
		624	265	467	1356	99
		46%	19%	35%		

Column 1: Houses with W.C.s to main sewer.

Column 2: Houses with W.C.s to private disposal plants—almost entirely to the Council's "standard design".

Column 3: Houses with pails, middens or closets over brooks and streams, etc.

Column 4: Totals.

Column 5: Existing and proposed new houses likely to be sewered in the foreseeable future.

There are modern Council Plants at Rhayader, Crossgates and Newbridge-on-Wye. The Pantydwr scheme has now been completed and work has started on Llanyre sewerage. There are small plants for the Council Houses at Dolau, Seven Stars and Brynichlas.

Several years ago a standard design for septic tanks was drawn up and copies of this were issued to all local contractors. This has been a well worth while project and these plants already installed have been working satisfactorily with minimum attention. Although based on Ministry recommendations this is not big enough for the new regulations.

Meat Inspection

There is no slaughterhouse within the Council's area. Meat is imported off the hook from Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes and farther afield.

Other Foods

Numbers and types of food premises in the district are:

Grocers	30
Butchers	5
Public Houses	15
Hotels	7
Cafes, Restaurants	5
School Canteens	10

All the Public Houses throughout the district have attained a satisfactory standard with the exception of four. Of these two have promised that the work will be put in hand and in fact plans have been drawn. This has been rather a lengthy process in spite of annual pleas from the licensing justices, but it is to be hoped that this coming year will see them all up to standard.

Destruction of Rats and Mice

A rodent operator is shared between Rhayader and Knighton Rural District Councils. This works out on an average of eighteen weeks annually in each district.

The treatment of infestations on farms is by far the greater part of the work in this area. This is not surprising in such a scattered rural area. The service is particularly well received and farmers are only too keen to call in the operator at the first sign of trouble. It has been a considerable time now since we have seen very heavy infestation. At one time we had a number of cases which used between 80 to 120 lbs. of poison in a week.

A very wary eye is being kept out for the incidence of warfarin resistant rats which have already occurred in Montgomeryshire. It is felt that warfarin resistance could easily be induced by unskilled treatment and every effort is being made to discourage farmers from carrying out their own treatment.

Water Supplies

All water undertakings are owned by the Council and are under the control of the Surveyor and Water Engineer.

<i>Parish</i>	<i>No. of Houses</i>	<i>Public Mains Piped/ Standpipes</i>	<i>Private Piped</i>	<i>Sources * Carried</i>
Abbeycwmhir	71	21	33	17
Cefnlllys Rural	26	6	12	8
Llanbadarnfawr	163	129	25	9
Llanfihangel Helygen	15	6	4	5
Llans'tffraid Cwmdeuddwr	168	85	62	21
Llanyre	215	163	33	19
Nantmel	205	69	64	72
Rhayader	349	349	—	—
St. Harmon	144	58	52	34
Total	1,356	886	285	186
Percentages		66%	21%	13%

* Includes hand pumped supplies.

Refuse Collection

Collection is made as follows:

Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr and Elan Valley—twice weekly

Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel—weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Llangurig Road and Tylwch—fortnightly.

Difficulties are beginning to arise over the final disposal of refuse. The Council's refuse tip has come to a close and refuse now has to be taken to Newbridge. This involves a trip from Rhayader of nine miles and nine miles back empty. This is causing difficulties by increased costs, increased time involving overtime and one other factor is playing its part. This is that the volume of paper, cardboard, etc., is on the increase and the existing side loader is at a grave disadvantage compared with a vehicle with a compressor.

A possible site for a refuse tip has been found and negotiations are continuing for its acquisition. It is hoped that with the advent of this new tip some arrangements can be made for the immediate and adequate covering of the refuse within as short a period as possible.

Public Cemetery

Of the fifty deaths in the year, four were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

Public Conveniences

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwm-deuddwr and the Cemetery, whilst the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

There has been a certain amount of vandalism during the past year but fortunately this has not reached alarming proportions. It is most marked that the brighter, the cleaner and the better the conveniences are maintained the less vandalism there is.

Public Swimming Pools

There is a small pool for infants in use in the Waun Capel Park. It has an improvised chlorination plant but it would be more effective if it were allowed to pump and function without stop throughout the warmer months.

Factories

<i>Premises</i> (1)	<i>Number</i> <i>on</i> <i>Register</i>	<i>Number</i>		
	(2)	<i>Inspections</i> (3)	<i>Written</i> <i>Notices</i> (4)	<i>Occupiers</i> <i>prosecuted</i> (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	—	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	24	4	2	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	25	4	2	—

<i>Particulars</i> (1)	<i>Number in which defects were found</i>				<i>No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted</i> (6)
	<i>Found</i> (2)	<i>Remedied</i> (3)	<i>Referred To H.M. Inspector</i> (4)	<i>By H.M. Inspector</i> (5)	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)					
Overcrowding (S.2) ...					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) ...					
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient ...				2	
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...					
(c) Not separate for sexes ...					
Other offences against the Act not including offences relating to Outwork					
Total				2	

Public Health Inspections

An approximation of visits made during the year are as follows:

Rehousing	34
Slum Clearance	12
House Improvements:	
Hill Farming	26
Standard Grants	132
Discretionary Grants	29
Public Health Act:	
Sewer connections	24
Drainage	6
Defects	23
Animals	3
Pests	3
Rats	1

Infectious diseases	10
Private Caravan Sites	16
Water Supplies—Public	6
—Private	85
—Samples	54
Factories	4
Offices, Shops and Railway Premises	39
Food:	
Shops	51
Public Houses	6
Cafes	5
Miscellaneous	42
Milk	1
Total	666

An analysis of this amount of work reveals a striking contrast to previous years when in 1962 there were over 52 visits made for Slum Clearance, etc., this has now dropped to 12. At the same time the number of visits made for House Improvements total 187. As has been stated elsewhere in this report these visits sometimes involve a considerable amount of time, it is therefore apparent that there has been a great swing from what might be described as statutory inspection towards advisory.

